

profits are given prominent attention. As the newspaper's masthead states, the Silver Star News is "Building Bridges For A Brighter Future" in Memphis.

In that tradition, Reverend Williams has undertaken a new venture. On May 15th, Reverend Williams will open the new Silver Park Plaza, a multi-service complex, for public and private events, including conferences, banquets, receptions, weddings, parties, meetings, seminars, recitals and concerts. The center will also serve as the newspaper's new home. What's significant about this new complex, Mr. Speaker, is that it not only represents a new beginning for the paper, it represents a new beginning for the Orange Mound community, the area of Memphis where the Silver Star News has had its offices since its founding. Through Reverend Williams vision and leadership, the Silver Star Park Plaza will serve as a catalyst for economic growth in the Ninth District.

The Silver Park Plaza venture is part of a larger national trend of capitalizing on the untapped social and economic assets in our under-served and rural areas. Michael Porter, a Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School and founder and Chairman of the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, believes that a new vision of economic development is needed to accelerate business growth in these areas. Sustainable economic progress, according to Professor Porter, must be based on drawing on our untapped competitive economic advantages which already exist in our central cities. Consider that more than 54 percent of the workforce growth over the next ten years will come from workers in central cities. Moreover, our central cities represent more than \$85 billion in retail spending potential each year in the United States. The University of Memphis has documented this untapped economic potential in various sections of our city. Governments can help spur economic growth, but ultimately, it's the private, for-profit business enterprises that will transform our communities, create jobs and produce wealth. The Silver Park venture embodies that philosophy. Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to recognize Reverend Williams and the Silver Park Plaza. I know that similar, untold success stories exist in congressional districts throughout the nation. I urge my colleagues to take a close look at them in order to learn how we can best shape public policy in recognition of this new direction of economic growth in America.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT M. BALL

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, this session Congress once again finds itself debating ways to strengthen our most important domestic program: Social Security. Like many Members, I have long valued the wise counsel of one of Social Security's greatest defenders, Mr. Robert M. Ball. For six decades, Mr. Ball has worked on behalf of our nation's elderly and the Social Security program. I have found that his long-term perspective and familiarity with the program invariably transcend the whims of today's younger critics. Earlier this

week, I read with great pleasure an article on Mr. Ball's achievements in the New York Times. The article which I include for the RECORD, eloquently describes his long-standing commitment to the Social Security program, and gives me hope that we will continue to benefit from his wisdom for years to come.

[From the New York Times, May 3, 1999]

A GREAT DEFENDER OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY

BATTLES ON

(By Robin Toner)

The conventional wisdom these days is that any major change to Social Security is unlikely before next year's elections, but Robert M. Ball remains ever vigilant. In the unending debate over the nation's pension system, Mr. Ball stands as the great defender of traditional Social Security, the genius of its basic principles, the soundness of its basic approach.

"Though I feel good about our position," he said in a lull in the struggle on a lazy spring afternoon, "people who think like I do better be very careful, and we better have good proposals and we better be alert. Or something may happen that we don't like."

Mr. Ball comes by his passion honestly, having been at the Social Security wars for a very long time. He went to work for Social Security in 1939, ran the program as Commissioner from 1962 to 1973, and has since played a principal role on some of the important advisory commissions. He is a regular source of advice for leading Congressional Democrats, has sent a series of memorandums on the issue to the White House over the last few years and, yes, is a Social Security beneficiary himself.

Mr. Ball, who is 85, said he had no complaints about life on the other end of the Social Security check. "They do a good job," he said, happily settled for the moment like any other cardigan-clad retiree in the living room of his ranch house in Alexandria, Va.

For many Democrats engaged in the issue, Mr. Ball is an irreplaceable link with 60 years of history. "There's a reason why the program is what it is," said Representative Earl Pomeroy of North Dakota, a Democratic point man on Social Security in the House. "And Bob Ball can explain it to you."

For the last few years, Mr. Ball's consuming cause has been beating back the forces of privatization: the notion that at least part of Social Security should be replaced with individual accounts that workers could invest as they see fit.

He sees privatization as a "slippery slope," a dangerous step away from the guaranteed benefits of Social Security. He contends that the system can be shored up for the next century by far less radical measures, like raising the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security taxes.

Mr. Ball acknowledges that his views are shaped by a very different world than that of the young privatizers. One of three children of a Methodist minister, he grew up in northern New Jersey and graduated from Wesleyan University with a master's degree in economics during the Depression. There were no jobs.

For help, he turned to his thesis adviser, who happened to have a friend involved in the new Social Security program. "He said, 'Well, this program is just starting up. It's going to be a big program. It's an attractive program and an important social program, and it would be a good thing if you got in on it in the beginning.'"

So Mr. Ball took the Civil Service exam during his honeymoon (he spent the rest of the time on a camping trip with his wife, Doris) and began work as a field representative in the Newark office of Social Security for \$1,620 a year.

He spent his early years visiting employers, trying to straighten out wage records and, along the way, proselytizing for a program that seemed quite revolutionary at the time. On the wall of his office at home, he has a picture of that Newark field staff, earnest young foot soldiers of the New Deal.

There are other pictures on that wall: President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the law creating Medicare, which Mr. Ball helped put into effect. The Presidential commission, signed by John F. Kennedy, that named Mr. Ball head of Social Security. (Mr. Ball noted that it mentioned more than once that he served at the pleasure of the President.) A picture of the Balls with President Richard M. Nixon in 1973, when Mr. Ball was leaving office. The newspapers at the time said he was "pushed out." Mr. Ball says: "I was perfectly happy to go, but I couldn't have stayed if I wanted to. I lasted for the first term."

Along the way, the Balls brought up two children: their son is a psychotherapist; their daughter, an art therapist.

Mr. Ball acknowledges that his retirement has been less than restful. He does a lot of reading, and not just on social insurance issues, he said a trifle defensively. Mostly novels and Romantic poetry.

But the care and tending of Social Security keeps pulling him back.

"There was a time when I felt a lot of pressure on the basis that there wasn't anybody else really working on it very much," he said. "Now there's a whole group. They'll carry on whether I die tomorrow and do as good or better job."

That was the idea behind the National Academy of Social Insurance, a nonprofit organization that does research on social insurance and tries to "enhance public understanding" of the issues; Mr. Ball was one of its founders 11 years ago.

Still, it is not at all clear that Mr. Ball is ready to pass the torch and enter the land of retirement he helped create.

"My wife and I had dinner with him and Doris two nights ago," said Henry Aaron, an economist at the Brookings Institution. "I don't know of any other 85-year-old who's wrestling with what he's going to do, new. But Bob is wrestling with that. I think he sees the health care issue emerging anew."

IN HONOR OF THE VENTURA HIGH SCHOOL WIND ORCHESTRA

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Ventura High School Wind Orchestra, which earned a near-perfect score at the National adjudicators Invitational last month in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

This group of dedicated musicians walked away with Outstanding Concert Band Trophy, the Outstanding Percussion Trophy and the Outstanding Brass Trophy. Piccolist Karen Magoon won the Outstanding Soloist Trophy, perhaps the most prestigious prize at the competition.

As a group, they earned a Performance Trophy Superior Rating, scoring 99 out of a possible 100 points.

During the contest, their rivals from schools across the United States gave the Ventura youngsters two standing ovations.

Mr. Speaker, as our nation works in concert to better our education system, it's important